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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

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Morocco: Taking the position that there are no US bases in Morocco, only US use of French bases, Prime Minister Balafrej has told the American ambassador that he doubts that even a provisional agreement on this issue is possible in the present climate of opinion in Morocco and other Arab states. Balafrej appears to be reflecting the view of King Mohamed V. The prime minister also proposed that the United States take the initiative and

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recognize the "principle of evacuation," making it clear that
the use of the five US bases in Morocco is temporary.

Laos: The new government, although excluding the Com-
munist-dominated Neo Lao Hak Zat (NLHZ) party, does not
mark a sharp break with its weak and corrupt predecessor,
Meanwhile, the trend within Laos continues to favor the NLHZ.

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19 Aug 58

DAILY BRIEF

ii

II. ASIA-AFRICA

Moroccan Premier Asks US to Recognize "Principle of Evacuation"

During a discussion on 15 August of the future of the American bases in Morocco, Premier Ahmed Balafrej indicated to the American ambassador that the United States must recognize the "principle of evacuation," and make clear that US forces are in Morocco temporarily and have no intention of maintaining permanent bases. This is the first time Balafrej has made such a request, although other officials have informally urged that a declaration of intention to evacuate the bases be made.

Since early this year the left wing of the Istiqlal party has been whipping up popular agitation for the total evacuation of all foreign troops, and Balafrej told an American news reporter recently that because France has not asked to retain four of the five American bases, United States forces must leave when the French forces depart.

Balafrej told the ambassador that there are in fact no US bases in Morocco--"only French bases containing US forces but under the French flag, French guard, and conducting relations with the Moroccan Government through French liaison." The premier expressed some doubt that a provisional agreement is possible in the "present climate of opinion in Morocco and other Arab states."

The position of Balafrej, and to a lesser extent that of the King, remains tenuous because of left-wing Istiqlal and labor union criticism of the predominantly moderate government. Belief is widespread throughout Morocco that the American bases were used to support the landings in Lebanon and that atomic weapons are stored at the bases.

The premier probably fears that any agreement might fatally damage the prestige of the King and Istiqlal moderates. He may not, therefore, be inclined to cooperate until the Istiqlal party crisis is settled and a possible government reorganization completed.

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New Laotian Government

The new Laotian Government excludes the Communist-dominated Neo Lao Hak Zat (NLHZ) but is otherwise an unsatisfactory compromise between conservative politicians and young reformists in the Committee for the Defense of the National Interest (CDNI). In his investiture speech, Prime Minister Phoui Sananikone said his government would oppose Communist expansion in Laos and eliminate corruption. With only a minority of capable and honest young leaders, however, it is doubtful that this government will undertake the radical steps necessary to achieve either objective. Thus the trend will continue to favor the NLHZ.

[redacted] Katay D. Sasorith is the most powerful individual in the cabinet. He is vice premier and holds both Defense and Interior portfolios. [redacted]

[redacted] judging from his past performance, he is unlikely to undertake a vigorous reform of the security forces and provincial administration. He opposes a drastic monetary reform desired by the United States and will be able to exert heavy pressure during negotiations.

The CDNI retreated from its demand for a majority position in a new government under pressure from the crown prince and evidence that its military support was wavering. CDNI members hold four posts in the 11-man cabinet, heading the important Finance and Foreign Affairs ministries. These young leaders are regarded as honest and probably effective. Their influence, however, is likely to be circumscribed because they have little support in the National Assembly and will probably be outvoted in the cabinet on critical issues. In any event their contribution will be at least partially offset by the inclusion of three nonentities from conservative political ranks who are considered inept and corrupt.

Bong Souvannavong, minister of education, public health, and cults, [redacted] may prove a disruptive

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influence in the cabinet. Until the May electoral campaign, when he was double-crossed by his pro-Communist allies, he was Laos' leading fellow traveler and anti-American spokesman.

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